

## **CRE: Walking the Talk**

By Debra Clark

Wynn McLean, General Manager of the Camrose Regional Exhibition is a strong practising advocate of volunteerism. His personal goal since assuming his position in 1997 has been to promote the advantages of volunteerism and he receives tremendous support from the CRE Board of Directors, who as well, are volunteers. The CRE has no formal policy in place for employee volunteerism in the community, however it is strongly encouraged. During potential employee interviews, volunteering is discussed and promoted. To this end, most of CRE staff are volunteers within the community. The CRE provides flexible work hours for staff when volunteer duties call them away during regular work hours. Should the need arise, staff can use the equipment at the CRE to finish a required project. McLean states, "There is a significant amount in staff pride in their varied community contributions. This helps to make for a very positive work environment and promotes good retention of staff."

While it might look like all this philanthropy might be costly for business, McLean says, "In the end, there is no cost; rather there are social and economic benefits, while building community support for the organization." Both the Board of Directors and the management lead by example, making sure they walk the talk!

Currently, the CRE has approximately 700 dedicated volunteers helping at various events. The gift of time from these many dedicated volunteers is an important part of the success of CRE events and McLean notes that the relationships create a win-win situation for all involved.

If other businesses in the Greater Camrose area are interested in giving back to community through an employee volunteerism program, McLean would be happy to share their experiences. For more information, contact the Volunteer Centre of Camrose and District at (780)672-0141.